

Mercer County Cancer Capacity and Needs Assessment Report Summary

Fact Sheet

The Office of Cancer Control and Prevention of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, in conjunction with a mandate from the Governor's Task Force on Cancer Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment in New Jersey and in collaboration with the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health of the UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School, has developed comprehensive cancer capacity and needs assessment reports for each county in the state. These reports are a result of initial implementation steps of the New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan (NJ-CCCP). The purpose of the reports is to identify the major cancer issues affecting each county and the county's available resources for cancer prevention, screening, and treatment, as well as to offer recommendations for improvement. Each report was written by county evaluators from a county-level point of view.

County Demographic Profile

- **2000 Population:** 350,761
- **Median Age:** 36.0
- **Racial Composition:**
 - 69% White
 - 20% Black
 - 5% Asian
- **Ethnic Composition:**
 - 10% Hispanic
- **Median Household Income:** \$56,612
- **% of residents ≥ 25 without high school diploma:** 18.2%
- **% of residents living below the poverty level:** 8.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Census 2000

Overall Cancer Burden

From 1996-2000, an average of 636.6 men and 452.4 women per 100,000 were diagnosed with cancer each year in Mercer County, compared to the New Jersey rate of 628.7 for men and 453.7 for women. The average annual death rate was 266.1 for men, and 180.9 for women in Mercer County, compared to the state rate of 261.1 for men and 181.6 for women. As in the state, the types of cancers which affect the most people in Mercer County are prostate, breast, lung, and colorectal.

Note: Rates are per 100,000 and age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. Census population standards.

Overarching Issues

- **Access and Resources:** Factors contributing to lack of access to healthcare resources in Mercer County include transportation, socioeconomics, lack of health insurance, cultural and belief systems, and household structure. The lack of health insurance for county residents and inadequate charity care reimbursement place economic burdens on county hospitals.
- **School Health Education:** All school systems address cancer-related topics, though some only superficially. There is no mandate for teaching sun protection guidelines.
- **Palliative Care:** There are four hospice programs that provide care to Mercer County.
- **Nutrition and Physical Activity:** Several organizations and hospitals in Mercer County offer nutrition and exercise counseling or programs. However, access to these programs is a problem for many residents.
- **Childhood Cancers:** There are no pediatric cancer services within Mercer County. Palliative care is available through local hospice organizations.
- **Advocacy:** The disproportionate burden of cancer within the black and Hispanic communities of Mercer County has been acknowledged by various advocacy groups. Cancer awareness, education, and early detection programs are planned at the County level.

Mercer County & New Jersey

1996-2000 Average Annual Age-Adjusted Incidence & Mortality Rates by Site

All Cancers	Incidence Rate ¹		Mortality Rate ²	
	Mercer County	NJ	Mercer County	NJ
Male	636.6	628.7	266.1	261.1
Female	452.4	453.7	180.9	181.6
NJ-CCCP Priority Cancer by Gender				
Breast, female	140.4	138.5	33.1	31.3
Cervical, female	9.7	10.9	3.1	3.1
Colorectal, male	78.4	79.0	32.3	29.5
Colorectal, female	52.9	54.4	20.6	20.1
Lung, male	93.0	92.5	73.3	74.8
Lung, female	52.6	55.4	37.2	41.6
Melanoma, male	19.8	20.1	2.9	4.4
Melanoma, female	10.5	11.9	1.3	1.9
Oral/Oropharyngeal, male	20.5	15.7	4.5	4.2
Oral/Oropharyngeal, female	7.7	6.4	1.7	1.6
Prostate, male	201.7	194.3	36.5	32.9

Sources: ¹ New Jersey State Cancer Registry, New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, August 2003

² National Cancer Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State Cancer Profiles (Accessed at <http://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/>)

Note: Rates are per 100,000 and age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. Census population standards.
A rate at least 10% higher than the corresponding state rate is shown in **bold italics**.

County Recommendations

- Fund additional research focused specifically on areas with larger minority groups and areas with high poverty rates (e.g., Trenton) to investigate incidence, mortality, and the resources available, cancer screening capacity in particular.
- Evaluate what primary healthcare providers are doing to promote cancer prevention, education, screening, and treatment.
- Continue to build political support to secure greater financial commitment of healthcare dollars to provide screening and early treatment for the uninsured, as a long-term recommendation.
- Encourage existing Mercer County health coalitions to work with outreach and education programs at the cancer centers in the region to increase awareness about the NJ-CCCP and the Mercer County Cancer Capacity and Needs Assessment Report.

For More Information

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To access the full Report Summary, visit the website:
www.state.nj.us/health/ccp